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EXAMINER

BRYANT, DAVID P

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Ex parte C. KENT ALDRIDGE

Appeal 2009-010188
Application 09/966,487
Technology Center 3700

Decided: November 30, 2009

Before EDWARD C. KIMLIN, CHARLES F. WARREN, and
ROMULO H. DELMENDO, *Administrative Patent Judges*.

KIMLIN, *Administrative Patent Judge*.

DECISION ON APPEAL

This is an appeal from the final rejection of claims 8-21 and 38-47.
We have jurisdiction under 35 U.S.C. § 6(b).

Claim 8 is illustrative:

8. A method for installing a seal on a bearing assembly, the method comprising:

forming a first interface surface in an inner bearing ring and a second interface surface in an outer bearing ring;

crimping a first seal member to the first interface surface of the inner ring;

crimping a second seal member to the second interface surface of the outer ring; and

assembling the bearing assembly such that the first and second seal members cooperate with one another to seal at least a portion of the bearing assembly.

The Examiner relies upon the following references as evidence of obviousness (Ans. 3):

Reiter	4,336,971	Jun. 29, 1982
Mondak	5,695,290	Dec. 09, 1997

The method entails crimping a first seal member to a surface of an inner ring and crimping a second seal member to an interface surface of an outer ring.

Appealed claims 8-21 and 38-47 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mondak in view of Reiter.¹

Appellant has not presented separate, substantive arguments for any particular claim on appeal. Accordingly, all the appealed claims stand or fall together.

We have thoroughly reviewed each of Appellant's arguments for patentability. However, we are in full agreement with the Examiner that the

¹ The Examiner has withdrawn the rejection based on McLarty.

claimed subject matter would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art within the meaning of § 103 in view of the applied prior art.

Accordingly, we will sustain the Examiner's rejection for essentially those reasons expressed in the Answer, and we add the following primarily for emphasis.

There is no dispute that Mondak, like Appellant, discloses a method of securing first and second seal members into grooves of surfaces of inner and outer rings, respectively. As recognized by the Examiner, Mondak does not disclose crimping the first and second seals into the inner and outer rings. However, Reiter evidences that it was known in the art to crimp a seal member into a groove of a ring. The Examiner points out that Reiter teaches that permanently attaching the seal member to the bearing by a crimping process prevents damage to the seal element from being installed incorrectly and prevents contaminants from entering the interior of the bearing, which are advantages over the removable, snap-fit seals of Mondak (*see* Ans. 4, first para.). Accordingly, we find no error in the Examiner's legal conclusion that it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to employ a crimping process to secure the seals and rings of Mondak.

We are not persuaded by Appellant's argument that Reiter does not teach crimping a first seal member to the surface of an inner ring in addition to crimping a second seal member to the surface of an outer ring. Securing first and second seal members to inner and outer rings is taught by Mondak, and we are satisfied that one of ordinary skill in the art would have found it obvious to utilize the crimping process of Reiter for both sealing members of Mondak.

Appellant also argues in the Reply Brief that a crimping tool other than the one disclosed by Reiter would be needed for securing the sealing member to the interior surface of Mondak's outer ring and that Reiter does not enable one of ordinary skill in the art to perform either of the crimping operations proposed for the Mondak bearing. The Examiner explains, however, that Reiter teaches that any number of procedures may be used to effect the crimping process other than the one specifically disclosed. The Examiner cites two Japanese references to support his argument that one of ordinary skill in the art would have been capable of selecting a suitable crimping tool for crimping a seal into an annual groove of a given bearing structure. Appellant, on the other hand, has not presented any evidence that one of ordinary skill in the art would be unable to employ a crimping process for securing the seals of Mondak. As noted by the Examiner, "Appellant's claimed invention is directed towards a method for mounting seal to a bearing rather than a specific crimping tool" (Supp. Ans. 4, last para.), and "even Appellant requires a different process (tool) for crimping the first and second seal members" (Supp. Ans. 5, first para.).

As a final point, we note that Appellant bases no argument upon objective evidence of non-obviousness, such as unexpected results.

In conclusion, based on the foregoing and the reasons well stated by the Examiner, the Examiner's decision rejecting the appealed claims is affirmed.

No time period for taking any subsequent action in connection with this appeal may be extended under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) (2008).

AFFIRMED

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